

CHAPTER 13

Basic Concepts of Sport

Questions

- **What is your first memory of any sport experience? How old were you, what did you play, and how did it go?**
- **Do you have “a team”? Why do you cheer for them and not a rival team?**
- **What makes sport meaningful to you?**

Objectives

- **Articulate the central role sport plays within contemporary culture.**
- **Explain why we play sports and any benefits we obtain from participation.**
- **Describe how formalizing sport created current institutions and organizations.**

Sport as Part of Culture

- **Organized sport was part of many ancient cultures.**
- **Academic study of sport developed more recently.**
- **Sport is based on the inherent human need for play.**
- **Sporting events are some of the largest entertainment events.**

Sport: The Natural Religion

- **Sport contains rituals and traditions similar to those seen in organized religions.**
 - Specific sequences at every game
 - Uniforms
 - Rules and customs
- **Sport provides personal yet communal experiences that automatically create groups of similar identities.**

Motivations for Sport

- ***Leisure:*** Release from regular routine of the day
- ***Play:*** Voluntary personal and social exploration
- ***Games:*** Play that is organized by skill and rules
- ***Competition:*** Consequence for winning and losing

Sport as Leisure

- **Sport offers a way to have fun and do something outside of “work.”**
- **We use discretionary time to play, away from responsibility.**
- **It is voluntary and nonproductive at its core.**

Sport as Play

- **Play is a natural human impulse.**
- **It fosters exploration of personal skills and abilities.**
- **It promotes the formation of social connections.**
- **It is governed by arbitrary rules or fantasy.**
- **Uncertainty of the outcome increases excitement.**
- **Children and adults play differently.**

Sport as a Game

- **A game is derived from play.**
- **It involves competition.**
- **The outcome is determined by physical skill, strategy, or chance.**
 - All sports are games; not all games are sports.
 - Sport requires physical skill along with strategy.
 - Games include mental skill and strategy.
- **Game are categorized by similar rules and requirements and can be grouped together (e.g., soccer with basketball, volleyball with tennis).**

Sport as Competition

- **Competition is inherent to sport.**
- **Zero-sum competition means that for me to win (+1), my opponent must lose (-1).**
- **Competition can be a festival or comparison of skill.**
- **Fair competition greatly enhances the quality of the sport experience.**

Institutionalization of Sport

- **Creation of a common form of a sport involves**
 - **universal application of rules, and**
 - **standardized equipment.**
- **Social institution of sport connects people and professionals (e.g., sports medicine, referees, managers, agents).**
- **Sport has influence in the sociopolitical sphere.**

Genesis of Sport Organizations

- **Sport's institutionalization created opportunities for direct comparison of ability; having the same rules and equipment creates a fair comparison.**
- **Organizations/associations create conditions for competition by controlling the schedule, officials, and administration.**
- **Formal record-keeping has been developed and is central to sport.**
- **Highly integrated into the public consciousness (media).**

Spectating

- **Increasing media exposure increased the acceptance of watching sports.**
- **Fans (short for “fanatics”) are an integral part of the sporting experience; consider how sports played largely without spectators during the COVID-19 pandemic.**
- **Can be highly personal, emotional, and/or cognitive.**
- **Spectators feel a sense of team loyalty when rooting for “our” side**

Aesthetics of Sport

- **Ancient Greeks depicted athletes as the ideal human form.**
- **Form sports**
 - **Aesthetic quality is foundational for the competition (e.g., gymnastics, figure skating, diving)**
 - **Judged on demonstration of qualities**
- **Other sports**
 - **Beauty in the demonstration of skill**
 - **Beauty in the athletic body in motion**
 - **Beauty in the drama of competition**

Sport Ethics

- **Moral philosophy of how people should behave (fair play)**
- **Sport can potentially develop, but will always reveal character**
- **British tradition**
 - Sport played vigorously but honorably
 - Not just about winning, but how you play the game
- **Intentional cheating violates integrity/essence of sport: Fair play**

Developmental Potential of Sport

- **Sport can enhance physical, mental, and social development (fitness, self-confidence, respect, fair play).**
- **Different venues for sport offer different developmental aims.**
 - Inclusion of all
 - Selection of a few
- **Sport can teach valuable and lifelong lessons.**

Activity

- **In your groups, debate what makes a sport a sport and what makes a game a game. Are certain activities easier to classify? Why?**
- **Discuss your experiences with sport. Are they positive or negative? What lessons did you derive? Which are you still using today?**
- **Describe what happens when sport goes wrong (e.g., cheating or violence).**

Summary

- **Sport is a major part of culture.**
- **People participate for various reasons.**
- **Formal sport institutions and organizations are epicenters of public attention and influence.**
- **Tasks/Assignments:**
- **Next Class:**